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LEE'S BIRTHDAY.

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The one hundredth anniversary of Gen. Robert E. Lee's birthday was celebrated at the Methodist Episcopal Church South in this city on January 19th, 1907, by the Stonewall Jackson Camp, the Kanawha Riflemen Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy, the Charleston Chapter of the U. D. C., Sons of Veterans and others.

The church was well filled with the old Confederates and their friends, and those in sympathy with them. Major Thomas L. Broun, of this city, presided at the meeting and in his opening address stated that in the summer of 1861 Gen. John B. Floyd was in Command of the "Floyd Brigade" and that Genl. Henry A. Wise was in command of the "Wise Legion," together containing about 8,000 soldiers, stationed west of Lewisburg, in West Virginia.

After the battle of Cornifax Ferry on Gauley River and at the mouth of Meadow River, the Floyd and Wise commands retreated towards Lewisburg, and Rosecrans's Army, about 12,000 strong, closely pursued them for three (3) days. The Wise Legion halted on the Sewell Mountains at night and commenced erecting fortifications. Floyd Brigade, however, marched to Meadow Bluff, some 12 miles nearer Lewisburg. Floyd and Wise did not act in concert. Floyd was Wise's senior in rank by one week only.

When the condition of the Confederate forces was made known in Richmond, Genl. Robert E. Lee was ordered to proceed at once and take command of Floyd's Brigade and Wise's Legion, and Floyd and Wise were both ordered to Richmond.

Upon the arrival of Genl. Lee at Sewell Mountain he ordered Floyd's command at Meadow Bluff to join the Wise Legion on Sewell Mountain, Genl. Lee deeming Big Sewell Mountain the better place for defensive action. And he then ordered all officers in those commands to appear before him, which was very promptly done, and Genl. Lee in person required each to state his position and rank, what command each belonged to, where stationed, etc., etc. In a few days Genl. Lee had these discordant elements, the Floyd Brigade and the Wise Legion, merged into one united army, ready and cheerfully willing to act just as he, Lee, should direct.

The army thus united, with Genl. Lee in command stopped the advance of Rosecrans' army of 12,000 men, and thereby compelled the enemy to abandon his advance movement on to Lewisburg and Staunton, and to retreat to the Kanawha Valley and westward.

Major Broun was placed in command of the third regiment of the Wise Legion after Col. Spalding was killed, which was early in August and before the battle of Cornifax Ferry.

Lee's prompt organization of these discordant elements (the Wise Legion and the Floyd Brigade) into one homogeneous army ready for action was spoken of by all officers and men with great admiration and satisfaction.

The chairman further stated that the surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox, April 10th, 1865, was a terrible shock to the whole South, and that Confederate officers and soldiers for a while were hopelessly despondent, and totally at a loss to know what to do or where to go, many declaring they would go to Mexico, Europe, in fact anywhere to avoid living under the Federal Flag. In a week after the surrender, Lincoln was assassinated. This deplorable event threw the Northern mind into a frenzied madness towards the South and for a while it looked as if the boasted civilization of the United States had reached an end.

What did Genl. Lee do in that very critical and trying period? In reply to many letters sent to him by Confederate officers he replied: "*Go home and go to work.* Stand by your old homes, your county, your state. Work to restore peace and quiet in the land of your birth."

This advice was most timely and it acted like a charm on the entire South. It was obeyed as if it were an order from the commanding General, and the soldiers of the Confederacy went right to work in the peaceful vocations of life.

An interesting event, the speaker stated, occurred in New York City respecting Memorial Exercises which Confederate officers and soldiers then in the city prepared to have upon the death of Genl. Lee in October, 1870.

It was then said that officers, soldiers, and men of the Confederate Army in New York City in October, 1870, numbered at least 5,000, all of whom were actively engaged in their respective occupations as merchants, bankers, clerks, lawyers, doctors, etc.

Officers and others of the Confederate Army to the number of 100 from the different Southern States who had been educated at the University of Virginia formed in 1866 an Alumni Association. The speaker was a member of this association, and stated that one half of them had been wounded in battles, and of course were *red hot* on Southern rights.

This association took an active part to have a Lee Memorial Meeting held in New York directly after the death of General Lee in October, 1870.

This movement met with much opposition from the radical republican element in the city, and some citizens thought a riot might result if any such meeting was then held in the city. The question was much talked about. Finally a meeting of about 100 prominent citizens was held to confer with the ex-Confederates and ascertain just what was to be done at the proposed Memorial Exercises. This conference resulted in authority being given to Genl. Lee's followers and admirers that such a meeting could be held, and that the city police, backed by 200 special policemen for the occasion would see that no disturbance should be had at such meeting.

This action greatly gladdened the hearts of the Confederates in New York. The Memorial Meeting was held in Cooper's Institute and 5,000 persons were present, among them many soldiers of the South. Speeches were delivered by prominent persons from the North and the South. The whole affair proved a decided success, and thereby the great metropolis of this country united itself most closely with the Southern Heart through Robert E. Lee.

(From the *Charleston Daily Gazette* of 24th January, 1907.)

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